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PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.

1844-45.

No. 49.

January 13, 1845.

SIR WM. R. HAMILTON, LL.D., President, in the
Chair.

Robert Scott Bradshaw, Esq., Thomas Davis, Esq., Sir Richard Franklin, M. D., Edmund Getty, Esq., George A. Hamilton, Esq., M. P., Henry G. Hughes, Esq., Capt. Henry James, R. E., Francis L'Estrange, Esq., Edward Lucas, Esq., John Phillips, Esq., Thomas N. Redington, Esq., M. P., Marmion W. Savage, Esq., and Richard Sharp, Esq., were elected Members of the Academy.

It was moved by Sir Wm. Betham, and seconded by P. D. Hardy, Esq., "That a Committee, not members of the Council, be appointed to examine the Returns laid on the Table of the Academy on the 30th of November last, to inquire into the facts therein stated, and to report thereon; and that the Committee consist of Sir William Betham, Lieut.-Col. Harry D. Jones, R. E., Thomas Hutton, Esq., William Hogan, Esq., and Aquilla Smith, Esq., M. D."

Which motion, having been put, was negatived without a division.

Mr. Robert Ball read a notice on the original use of cer-

tain Golden Ornaments, and other articles, in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

Mr. Ball having urged on those who study antiquities the importance of applying observation and analogy to the solving of antiquarian difficulties, shewed how these instruments of inquiry should be applied, by the study of races of mankind at present existing, whose state may be supposed somewhat similar to that in which the people were into whose history inquiry is proposed to be made; it being fair to look for like effects from similar causes. He referred to a former paper, read January, 1844, in which he shewed how metal celts, identical in form with those found in Ireland, were used at the present day on the east coast of Africa; and how stone celts, also similar to those of Ireland, were used in Mexico. Applying the same reasoning to explain the object and use of the golden ornaments called by some diadems, by others gorgets or collars, he mentioned that in the Sandwich Islands the natives used stone celts precisely similar to those found in Ireland; they also had those curious lentilform discs of stone, precisely identical with those found in Ireland, and to which sundry fanciful uses have been ascribed, but which Cook and others found to be used as bowls in a favourite game of the natives, who had bone bodkins, &c., similar to those of olden time in Ireland; it was, therefore, little more than was to be expected, to find analogies to the golden ornaments found associated with the celts and bowls to which Mr. Ball referred. This, he maintained, he had done, in one case at least, that of the golden ornament referred to, which has its representative in the Sandwich Isles, where gold is not known. Sharks' teeth, mother of pearl, feathers, and basket work, are so put together, as was shewn by the figures exhibited, as in all but material to resemble the ornaments of gold in the most striking manner.

From the way in which the ornaments of the Sandwich

Islanders are stated to be worn, Mr. Ball declared he could not doubt the golden ornaments were worn in a similar manner. The Sandwich Island articles to which he alluded formed a part of the fine collection made in Cook's voyages, and deposited in the Museum of the University. He trusted he would be able to make many of the weapons and ornaments therein contained useful in throwing light on Irish antiquities. He referred to several curious instances, where the use of hypothesis had misled antiquaries, and where observations of existing people had set their opinions aside. He mentioned that he had recently proved, that an article long existing in the University Museum, and known as the best example of an old form of a trumpet, had, by the discovery of its remaining parts, proved to be a chemical instrument for burning gas, or inflammable vapour; and he concluded by stating, that the article figured in the seventeenth volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, as an astronomical instrument of the ancient Irish, proved to be a piece of chain armour. These two last mistakes he gave as examples of a want of exactness of observation, and of the mischief of hypothesis.

The Secretary read a paper by Professor Young of Belfast, on Diverging Infinite Series, and on certain Errors in Analysis connected therewith.

The subject of diverging series is one of considerable perplexity in analysis, and has given occasion to theories of explanation involving views and statements entirely opposed to the general principles of algebraical science. It has, for instance, been affirmed of such series—when they present themselves as developments of finite expressions—that, though algebraically true, they may, nevertheless, be arithmetically false. By some they are considered to justify conclusions palpably erroneous and absurd, as, for example, that